

# ST. GEORGE OF MANGANA, MARIA SKLERAINA, AND THE “MALYJ SION” OF NOVGOROD

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THE love story of Constantine IX Monomachos and Maria Skleraina is too well known to be retold here,<sup>1</sup> but an unpublished seal in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection raises some questions of more general interest about the institutional and economic arrangements that were made after Constantine's accession to the throne and Skleraina's introduction to the palace circles with the title *sebaste*.

D.O. accession number: 58.106.39.

Diam. 39 mm.; field 25 mm. Very well preserved. See fig. 1.

a. Inscription of five lines preceded and followed by an ornament; border of dots.

— ✱ —  
+CΦΡΑΓ,  
ΤΥΣΕΚΡΕΤ,  
ΤΥΑΓΜΙΜΓΕ  
ΩΓΤΥΤΡΟ  
ΠΑΙΟΦΟΡ,  
— ✱ —

+Σφραγ(ις)  
τοῦ σεκρέτ(ου)  
τοῦ ἁγ(ίου) μ(ε)γ(αλο)μ(άρ)τ(υρος) Γε-  
ωργ(ίου) τοῦ Τρο-  
παιοφόρ(ου)

b. Inscription of six lines, preceded by an ornament; border of dots.

— ✱ —  
ΣΟΙΚΥΤ  
Υ ΠΕΠΕΡΙ  
ΛΑΜΠΡΩΣ  
ΕΥΤΥΧΕΣΤ,  
ΤΥΕΡΑC  
— Τ, —

(καὶ) οἴκου τ(ῆς)  
ὑπε<ρ>περι-  
λάμπρου (καὶ)  
εὐτυχεστ(ά)-  
τ(ης) σεβασ-  
τ(ῆς).

+Σφραγίς τοῦ σεκρέτου τοῦ ἁγίου μεγαλομάρτυρος Γεωργίου τοῦ Τροπαιοφόρου καὶ οἴκου τῆς ὑπερπεριλάμπρου καὶ εὐτυχεστάτης σεβαστῆς.

“This is the seal of the *sekreton* of Saint George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer; which [*sekreton*] is also the *oikos* of the *hyperperilampros* and *eutychestate* [*felicissima*] *sebaste*.”

*Date*: eleventh century. The epigraphy of the seal leaves no doubt about its dating to the middle of the eleventh century;<sup>2</sup> and the institutional commentary that follows will allow us to assign it to the period between the years 1042 and ± 1045.

<sup>1</sup> See W. Seibt, *Die Skleroi. Eine prosopographisch-sigillographische Studie* (Vienna, 1976), 71–76.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., for example, the firmly dated seals of 1032 and 1045, in *Codice Diplomatico Barese*, IV: *Le pergamene di S. Nicola di Bari*, ed. F. Nitti di Vito (Bari, 1900), nos. 21 and 32 (“tavola dei sugelli,” nos. 1 and 2); or the seal of Isaac [I] Comnenos, from the time when he was still stratopedarches of the Orient (before 1055): G. Zacos and A. Vegler, *Byzantine Lead Seals*, I,3 (Basel, 1972), no. 2680.

The title *σεβαστή* was created by Constantine IX Monomachos around 1042 and bestowed upon his mistress, Maria Skleraina, with the consent of both Empresses, his wife Zoe and Theodora. The new title (the Greek translation of *augusta*) reflects an obvious effort to associate its bearer, as much as possible, with the Empresses, who were still called *αὐγοῦσαι*. Moreover, John Zonaras states clearly that the new title was previously conceived as an imperial one (*τῆς πρώην βασιλικῆς . . . τιμῆς*), and that Skleraina was addressed by the public as *δέσποινα*—the same term that was currently used when addressing empresses.<sup>3</sup> Michael Psellos also uses this last term when writing of her;<sup>4</sup> in other passages he calls her *δεσπότης καὶ βασιλὶς* and declares that she was given an “imperial bodyguard” (*δορυφορίας βασιλικῆς*) and that during official processions she followed closely behind the Empresses.<sup>5</sup> The populace of Constantinople, greatly attached to the Macedonian dynasty, considered her presence in the palace a threat to Zoe and Theodora and manifested their discontent during a procession on 9 March 1044.<sup>6</sup>

Skleraina died around the year 1045.<sup>7</sup> After the death of Zoe (1050), Constantine Monomachos took a new mistress, an Alan princess, bestowing upon her the same title of *sebastē*, and assigning to her an “imperial bodyguard” and important revenues, which she kept until her lover’s death in 1055. The historians who mention these events underline that the *sebastē* was *not* a “crowned” empress, although the nature of her title assimilated her to the *basileia*.<sup>8</sup>

It should be added here that the terms *sebastos* and *sebastē* reappear twice in the sources in connection with the year 1057. When the rebel Isaac Comnenos won his first decisive victory over the army sent against him by Michael VI, he was acclaimed by his soldiers *sebastos* and *spectabilis*.<sup>9</sup> After he assumed

power in Constantinople, he brought into the city his wife and had her also acclaimed *augusta* and *sebastē*.<sup>10</sup> The “imperial” connotations of the title are obvious.

The title *sebastos* reappears again shortly before 1078, and with the Comnenian reform it becomes the main basis for the new hierarchy of titles.<sup>11</sup> One could suppose that the title “*sebastē*” on our seal might simply refer to the wife of a *sebastos* of the new, Comnenian, type. But this hypothesis has to be discarded for two reasons: first, the fact that the proper name of the *sebastē* is not spelled out on our seal seems to indicate that the title was then held by only one person; and, second, the epithets accompanying the title exclude the possibility of its referring to the wife of a late eleventh-century *sebastos*.

‘Υπερπερίλαμπρος is not particularly significant: this form of the word is attested only once toward the end of the eleventh century and seems to be a title itself<sup>12</sup>—not an epithet, as on our seal. It is a pompous compound word, deriving from—and superior to—*ὑπέρλαμπρος*, commonly used in eleventh-century documents to designate persons holding the dignity of *proedros*.<sup>13</sup> But the presence of the epithet *εὐτυχιστάτη* has in itself a demonstrative value; *εὐτυχής*, (*παν*)*εὐτυχέστατος*, *φηλικίσσιμος* (*felicissimus*)<sup>14</sup> are used only for a caesar,

<sup>10</sup> E. Tsolakes, ‘Η συνέχεια τῆς χρονολογίας τοῦ Ἰωάννου Σκυλίτζη (Salonika, 1968), 103: *αὐγοῦσαν ἀναγορεύει σεβαστήν*.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. my remarks in “L’évolution de l’organisation administrative de l’empire byzantin au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *TM*, 6 (1976), 126–27.

<sup>12</sup> Anna Comnena, *Alexiade*, ed. B. Leib, II (Paris, 1943), 81.

<sup>13</sup> *Akty russkago na svjatom Afone monastyrja sv. Panteleimona* (Kiev, 1873), 30; F. Dölger, *Aus den Schatzkammern des heiligen Berges* (Munich, 1948), no. 57, line 13, and no. 58, line 14.

<sup>14</sup> Cf., for example, Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De cerimoniis aulae byzantinae*, Bonn ed. (1829), 221, 224, 225, 443, 457; L. Petit, “Vie et office de S. Michel Maléinos,” *ROChr*, 7 (1902), 551; I. and P. Zepos, *Jus Graecoromanum*, I (Athens, 1931), 476, 477, 479; G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, II (Vienna, 1856), 18, 19; G. Rhallès and M. Potles, *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, I (Athens, 1852), 291, and V (Athens, 1855), 307; L. Petit, “Le monastère de Notre-Dame de Pitié en Macédoine,” *IRAIK*, 6 (1900), 34, 46; Νέος Ἑλλ., 8 (1911), 31; *REB*, 21 (1963), 106, 108; Zacos and Veglery, *Lead Seals* (*supra*, note 2), nos. 2683, 2722, 2722 bis.

<sup>3</sup> John Zonaras, Bonn ed. (1897), III, 620.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Psellos, *Scripta minora*, ed. E. Kurtz and F. Drexler, I (Milan, 1936), 198, line 214.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Psellos, *Chronographie*, ed. E. Renauld, I (Paris, 1926), 143, 145, 146. Cf. Zonaras, *loc. cit.*, 619.

<sup>6</sup> John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, ed. I. Thurn, CFHB, V (Berlin–New York, 1973), 434.

<sup>7</sup> This approximate date, proposed by Seibt, *Die Skleroi*, 75, will be partly confirmed below.

<sup>8</sup> Psellos, *Chronographie*, II (Paris, 1928), 46; Zonaras, 648.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Attaliotes, *Historia*, Bonn ed. (1853), 55: *σεβαστὸς παρὰ πάντων ἀναγορευόμενος καὶ περίβλεπτος*.

the highest state dignitary after the emperor, whose appointment was effected by coronation and whose rank was described by the Byzantines as "similar to the imperial glory."<sup>15</sup> After the Comnenian reform, the same epithet was used in conjunction with the new titles of sebastokrator and, later, of despotes, both of which designated higher hierarchical positions than that of the caesar—while the Comnenian sebastoi ranked well below the caesar. In other words, whereas an εὐτυχιστάτη σεβαστή cannot belong to the Comnenian period, this designation, placing its bearer at a rank similar to the caesar's, slightly below the empresses, fits perfectly well with what we know about the sebastai of Constantine Monomachos' reign.

Of the two mistresses of Constantine IX who held this title, we can easily show that the sebaste of our seal is not the Alan princess, for we know that, although she also received generous imperial donations, the Tropaiophoros was certainly not her oikos. In a chrysobull of 1054 it is clearly stated that the properties of the Alan sebaste were distinct from those of the *sekreton tou Tropaiophorou*.<sup>16</sup> It thus becomes obvious that our seal refers to Maria Skleraina and has to be dated between 1042 (the accession of Constantine IX to the throne) and Skleraina's death ca. 1045.

*The sekreton of the Tropaiophoros.* St. George the Great Martyr and Trophy-bearer is undoubtedly the foundation of St. George of Mangana created by Constantine IX Monomachos between the years 1042 (the return of Skleraina to Constantinople) and 21 April 1047 (the inauguration of the grandiose church of St. George).<sup>17</sup> Historians agree in saying that in 1042 Skleraina first settled in an inconspicuous house (*oikos*) at Kynegion and that the Emperor, in order to justify in the eyes of the public his frequent visits to his mistress, began around it important construction works that ended as a vast complex of buildings, situated amidst beautiful gardens, and included a palace, a monastery with the church of Saint George, a home for the aged (γηροτροφεία), a home for

the poor (πτωχοτροφεία), a residence for foreigners (ξενῶνες), and a hospital (νοσοκομείον),<sup>18</sup> not to speak of the famous school of law that was housed there around 1047.<sup>19</sup> Michael Psellos and, following him, John Zonaras even specify that the Emperor transformed Skleraina's residence into "his own oikos" (οἶκον ἑαυτοῦ, οἶκον οἰκεῖον).<sup>20</sup> The term *oikos* seems to have in this context a technical meaning: it designates a "foundation," an εὐαγῆς οἶκος<sup>21</sup> created by the Emperor in order to fulfill certain social—mainly philanthropic—functions and financed from the tax-exempt properties allocated to it from the very beginning;<sup>22</sup> any surplus of its revenues was to go to the private imperial treasury or to any person who received the administration of the *oikos* as an imperial grant. As far as St. George of Mangana is concerned, we know that it possessed, among others, a wheat mill, a bakery, real estate in Constantinople,<sup>23</sup> and extensive lands in the provinces, such as the estate of Bessai, near Ephesos,<sup>24</sup> and, possibly, vineyards in the region

<sup>18</sup> Psellos, *Chronographie*, I, 143–44; II, 61–63; Attaliotes, 71; Skylitzes, 476–77; Zonaras, III, 619–20, 646, 647. For the history of the monastery, see R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'empire byzantin*. I, *Le siège de Constantinople et le patriarcat oecuménique*, III, *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), 70–76; see also S. G. Mercati, "Un testament inédit en faveur de Saint-Georges de Manganes," *REB*, 6 (1948), 36–47.

<sup>19</sup> P. Lemerle, *Cinq études sur le XI<sup>e</sup> siècle byzantin* (Paris, 1977), 207–12. I accept the date established by Lefort, *loc. cit.*, for it allows for some years to elapse between the initiation of the project and its completion followed by the installation of the law school on the premises.

<sup>20</sup> Psellos, *Chronographie*, I, 143; Zonaras, III, 619–20. Cf. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 274–75 and notes 56–59.

<sup>21</sup> The expression εὐαγῆς οἶκος is used by Constantine Monomachos himself when speaking of his Mangana foundation: Zepos, *Jus*, I, 622.

<sup>22</sup> The estates of such imperial foundations enjoyed the same tax exemptions and other privileges as all state or crown property: see the *Peira* of Eustathios Romaios, 9,7 and 15,2, in Zepos, *Jus*, IV, 39, 53.

<sup>23</sup> Zepos, *Jus*, I, 631, 632; Mercati, "Un testament" (*supra*, note 18), 47.

<sup>24</sup> Zepos, *Jus*, I, 637. A part (?) of this estate of Bessai was later donated by Constantine Monomachos to St. Lazaros Galesiotes, who reluctantly accepted it, with the obligation to pray for the already deceased Maria Skleraina and for the Emperor himself: *ActaSS*, November, III (Brussels, 1910), 584; cf. R. Janin, *Les églises et les monastères des grands centres byzantins* (Paris, 1975), 244, 245.

<sup>15</sup> N. Oikonomidès, *Les listes de présence byzantines des IX<sup>e</sup> et X<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 1972), 97–99, cf. 293 (with bibliography).

<sup>16</sup> Zepos, *Jus*, I, 637.

<sup>17</sup> Date established by J. Lefort, "Rhétorique et politique: Trois discours de Jean Mauropous en 1047," *TM*, 6 (1976), 271–84.

of Thebes.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the church received from the Emperor a *talanton* in cash, every year on St. George's day (23 April).<sup>26</sup>

Our seal shows clearly that even before the completion of its edifices, St. George of Mangana was already an independent financial institution with its proper lay administration. The latter is called a *sekretion*, a term that reappears in connection with the institution in documents of the years 1046, 1048, and 1054;<sup>27</sup> this term indicates that it was a bureau of public finance,<sup>28</sup> a *mega oikonomieion*<sup>29</sup> administered by lay *sekretikoi* (*notarioi*, *protonotarioi*, *logaristai*) having at their head the μέγας οἰκονόμος τοῦ Τροπαιοφόρου who is superior in rank to the *hegoumenos* of the monastery.<sup>30</sup> Among grand *oikonomoi* of the eleventh century are Michael vestarches,<sup>31</sup> George Laktentitzes (?) patrician and *demarchos* of the Venetoi,<sup>32</sup> and Constantine *proedros* and *mystikos*.<sup>33</sup>

It must be stressed here that the *oikonomieion* of St. George of Mangana is an institution

<sup>25</sup> N. Svoronos, "Recherches sur le cadastre byzantin et la fiscalité aux XI<sup>e</sup> et XII<sup>e</sup> siècles," *BCH*, 83 (1959), 15<sub>18</sub>: ἀμπέλιον . . . ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτοῦ μετοχίου τοῦ οἴκου τῶν Μογγάνων. The use of the word μετόχιον indicates that the owner of the vineyard was a monastery; for this reason, I think that this must have been a property of St. George of Mangana and not of the *kouratorikion* of Mangana, about which see note 35 *infra*.

<sup>26</sup> Attaliotes, 72.

<sup>27</sup> Zepos, *Jus*, I, 631 (σέκρετον τοῦ μεγάλου οἰκονομείου τοῦ ἁγίου Γεωργίου τοῦ Τροπαιοφόρου), 632, 637 (σέκρετον τοῦ Τροπαιοφόρου).

<sup>28</sup> Oikonomidès, *Les listes* (*supra*, note 15), 309, note 121.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. note 27 *supra*.

<sup>30</sup> Zepos, *Jus*, I, 632. These titles are known mainly from eleventh-century seals (list in Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 277), some of which are now preserved in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection. One should add to this list the unpublished seal (D.O. 55.1.4927) of "Nicetas, deacon of the Great Church, patriarchal cleric and *notarios* of the *oikonomieion* of the Nea and of the *Tropaiophoros*," which seems to attest that some time in the late eleventh century the bureaus of the Nea and of the *Tropaiophoros* had been united into one service. See also J. Darrouzès, "Le mouvement des fondations monastiques au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle," *TM*, 6 (1976), 160.

<sup>31</sup> Seal published (with incomplete reading and erroneous date) in G. Schlumberger, *Sigillographie de l'empire byzantin* (Paris, 1884), 150. This specimen is now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Shaw 22) together with a second one, better preserved (D.O. 58.106.171).

<sup>32</sup> Fogg Museum Collection, no. 600.

<sup>33</sup> See *infra*, pp. 243–44.

different and independent from the *kouratorikion* of Mangana, which had been renovated by Basil I in the ninth century and which survived as a separate bureau throughout the eleventh century; as Lemerle has pointed out, the *oikonomieion* of St. George is called in official documents "the *Tropaiophoros*" and is governed by a (megas) *oikonomos*, while the *kouratorikion*'s official name is "the Mangana" and is governed by a (megas) *kourator*.<sup>34</sup> Although both are eventually called *oikoi* and seem to operate in a similar manner, they are distinguished by the fact that the *Tropaiophoros* is an *euages oikos*, combining a philanthropic with a financial mission, while the *kouratorikion* of Mangana is simply concerned with the direct exploitation of crown properties.<sup>35</sup> The former's operation is probably supervised by the *oikonomos ton euagon oikon*,<sup>36</sup> attested from the beginning of the eleventh century to 1088 and regularly mentioned in imperial chrysobulls granting tax exemptions to monasteries or lay magnates; the latter keeps its traditional status and depends directly on the emperor. For this reason it is also mentioned separately in the chrysobulls granting tax exemptions.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, our seal affords evidence that at some time between 1042 and 1045 the *sekretion* of the *Tropaiophoros* had become the *oikos* of the *sebaste* Maria Skleraina. In other words, Constantine Monomachos donated to her this new financial enterprise in order to provide her with appropriate revenues after she was allowed to stay in the Great Palace and was granted the title of *sebaste*.<sup>38</sup> These revenues must have been substantial, since Skleraina soon managed to increase her personal prestige by distributing alms as well as gifts to influential people, including the two Empresses Zoe and Theodora.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, it is very probable that she used for personal propaganda the regular

<sup>34</sup> Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 227 ff.

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., Zepos, *Jus*, I, 616: The *kouratorikion* of Mangana receives the *paktion* (i.e., the rent) of an estate, while its taxes go to the *sekretion* of the *genikos*. Cf. also note 25 *supra*.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Oikonomidès, "L'évolution" (*supra*, note 11), 139–40.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 278 ff.

<sup>38</sup> At the very beginning of Skleraina's stay in Constantinople, the Emperor used to send her presents in cash: Psellos, *Chronographie*, I, 144.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 147. Skleraina is also known to have sent 10 litrai of gold coins as a gift to St. Lazaros Galesiotes: *Acta SS*, Nov., III, 584.

distributions of food to the poor, channeled through the prochotropheion of the Tropaiophoros, since an eleventh-century bronze tessera, which could well refer to Skleraina, bears the metrical inscription: Τροφή πενήτων τῆς σεβαστῆς Μαρίας.<sup>40</sup> The revenues of the Tropaiophoros were thus put in the service of Skleraina's political ambitions.

The concession of an imperial *euages* oikos to an individual is a rather common Byzantine practice, which was attested already in the ninth and tenth centuries and which became frequent in the eleventh.<sup>41</sup> These concessions were normally made for life but never became hereditary. After the death of the beneficiary, the oikos came back under the control of the emperor, who either kept it with its revenues for himself or gave it to another individual whom he wanted to support. This is what happened with the oikos of St. George of Mangana. When Maria Skleraina died, it returned to the Emperor, who started distributing part of its properties to monasteries for the commemoration of his beloved mistress.<sup>42</sup> In May 1046 Constantine Monomachos granted by chrysobull to the monks of Nea Moni of Chios the right to stay in a building belonging to the Tropaiophoros when they visited Constantinople, and to receive each year from the sekreton the sum of 30 miliaresia as well as 30 modioi of wheat, which was to be ground and baked into loaves of bread for them by the monks of Mangana.<sup>43</sup> The fact that Skleraina is not even mentioned in this chrysobull, although it concerns directly what used to be her oikos, is a further indication that she had died sometime before May 1046.<sup>44</sup> Soon after this last date the oikos of Mangana was given by the Emperor to Constantine Leichoudes.

*The "Malyj Sion" of Novgorod.* In the Governmental Museum of Novgorod is preserved a gilded silver "model of a church" in the form

of a rotunda, known as the "Malyj Sion" (the Small Sion or Jerusalem) and coming from the treasury of the church of St. Sophia in that city. On the rim of a round tray stand six decorated columns, united by arches, supporting a dome on top of which there is a small inscribed disc (to which we shall return) surmounted by a decorative cross with a representation of Christ in its center—a cross similar to the ones of "enkolpia of the eleventh to the second quarter of the twelfth century."<sup>45</sup> Art historians have established that the upper part of the Sion, including the dome, is earlier than the lower part; they consider both to be Russian artifacts, the upper part possibly made in Kiev, the lower in Novgorod, and the two put together in Novgorod sometime in the twelfth century. The whole thing may have served as a paten (fig. 2).

Several scholars have tried to read the Greek inscription on the disc of the dome; but a complete and correct reading was possible only when, on the occasion of certain restorations, the disc was removed from its place and photographed. Right in the middle of the disc, a hole, made to secure the cross on top of it, has destroyed part of the inscription. Yet, what remains is sufficient to allow a satisfactory reading (fig. 3).

The inscription consists of a cruciform monogram, the center of which is destroyed by the hole, bearing at the ends of its bars the letters K (left), N and C in ligature (right), T surmounted by δ (top), and A surmounted by ω (bottom). In the quarters, the inscription continues on four lines: ΠΡΟ-ΕΔΡΩ/MVCTI-KOYK/M... ΤΡΟ/ΠΑΙ-ΟΦΩΡΩ. Five letters are missing in line 3 because of the hole in the center of the disc.

This inscription has been recently published by V. Šandrovskaia,<sup>46</sup> who resolved the monogram correctly as Κωνσταντίνου but ignored the lacuna of line 3, and thus ended up with a text that does not make satisfactory sense (Κωνσταντίνου, προέδρου, μυστικοῦ καὶ μεγάλου τροπαιοφόρου). Moreover, she proposed an interpretation of the inscription that is, to say the least, debatable. She understands the title πρόεδρος as designating a metropolitan (and,

<sup>40</sup> G. Schlumberger, *Mélanges d'archéologie byzantine* (Paris, 1885), 254. Cf. also Seibt, *Die Skleroi* (*supra*, note 1), 74 note 265 (other unpublished similar tesserae in the Zacos collection).

<sup>41</sup> I have listed several examples of such concessions in "L'évolution," 140.

<sup>42</sup> *ActaSS*, Nov., III, 584.

<sup>43</sup> Zepos, *Jus*, I, 631.

<sup>44</sup> Maria Skleraina was buried inside the church of St. George of Mangana: Nicetas Choniates, *Historia*, ed. I. A. Van Dieten (Berlin-New York, 1975), 614, line 86.

<sup>45</sup> See the description of the object in G. N. Bočarov, *Prikladnoe iskusstvo Novgoroda Velikogo* (Moscow, 1969), 28–29 and pl. 13.

<sup>46</sup> V. S. Šandrovskaia, "Grečeskaja nadpis' 'Malogo Novgorodskogo Siona,'" *VizVrem*, 38 (1977), 157–60. I am grateful to Professor A. Každan for drawing my attention to this publication.

in this context, a metropolitan of Kiev); she declares that the lay title *μυστικός* should not be considered an obstacle to this interpretation since we know that already in the tenth century a *mystikos*, Nicholas, had become patriarch of Constantinople (901–7, 912–25); and she admits that the meaning of the “mysterious” words *μέγας τροπαιοφόρος* remains an open question. She then proceeds to identify the Constantine of this inscription with one (preferably the first) of the two metropolitans of this name who occupied the see of Kiev in the twelfth century (1156–58, died 1159; 1167–71 or after 1174).

All this has to be seriously revised. The title *πρόεδρος* is used quite often on seals, especially metrical ones, instead of *μητροπολίτης* or *ἐπίσκοπος*, but in such cases it is always followed by the name of the see, and this is not the case on the Novgorod disc.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, the lay office of *μυστικός* is certainly incompatible with ecclesiastical functions. The example of the patriarch of Constantinople Nicholas I can be discarded easily, since we know that he held this office *before* he ascended to the patriarchal throne but certainly not after his nomination, when he kept just the surname *ὁ Μυστικός*.

Moreover, I think that if we take into consideration the lacuna of line 3 and recall what was said above about the administration of the *sekreton* of the *Tropaiophoros* (p. 241), we can propose a secure restitution of the inscription of the “Malyj Sion”:

Κωνσταντίνου προέδρου, μυστικοῦ κ(αί)  
μ(ε)γ(άλου) [ο]κ(ο)ν(όμου) τ(οῦ) Τροπαιοφό-  
ρου.<sup>48</sup>

The above combination of titles allows us to establish an approximate date for the inscription. It must have been engraved after 1042 (*terminus post quem* for the creation of the *sekreton* of the *Tropaiophoros* of which Constantine was the great *oikonomos*). On the other hand, the honorific title *proedros* for someone who was a high state official, such as a *mystikos*, suggests a date before the end of the eleventh century since the title of *proedros*, which was frequently bestowed

by the emperors of the second half of the eleventh century, lost its prestige and barely survived the reform of the Court hierarchy made by Alexios I Comnenos. In 1117 and 1118 the title of *proedros* is borne by representatives of the provincial gentry, and soon afterward disappears.<sup>49</sup>

The new reading of the inscription and the date we have assigned to it have a certain importance in connection with the liturgical vessel of which the inscribed disc is a part. The “Malyj Sion,” or at least its upper part, is not a Russian artifact of the twelfth century, as has been believed up to now; it must have been made in Constantinople during the eleventh century, sometime between 1042 and *ca.* 1090, upon the order of Constantine, *proedros*, *mystikos*, and great *oikonomos* of the *Tropaio-phoros*.

Although there were several *proedroi* called Constantine during this period,<sup>50</sup> I think that one may consider a tentative identification of the official who commissioned the “Malyj Sion” with Constantine Leichoudes and date the manufacture of this sacred vessel to the late forties or very early fifties of the eleventh century. It is merely a hypothesis, but it is supported by: a. elements in Leichoudes’ career, and b. the historical context of the period.

a. *The career.* Constantine Leichoudes,<sup>51</sup> a Constantinopolitan eunuch<sup>52</sup> and a learned

<sup>49</sup> See Oikonomides, *Les listes*, 299, and “L’évolution,” 125–28. An unpublished document of Docheiariou, of 1117, is issued by a certain Nicephorus *proedros*, who is a landowner living in Thessalonica; in a document of 1118 issued in Crete, we meet several *proedroi* among the lower representatives of the local authorities, but already the *katepano* of the island is a *protoproedros*: Fr. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi*, VI (Vienna, 1890), 96.

<sup>50</sup> List, now incomplete, in Ai. Christophilopoulou, ‘Η σύγκλητος εἰς τὸ Βυζαντινὸν κράτος, Ἀκαδημία Ἀθηνῶν, in Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Ἀρχείου τῆς Ἱστορίας τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Δικαίου, 2 (1949), 82–83.

<sup>51</sup> The little we know about Leichoudes’ career and education has been recently studied by G. Weiss, *Oströmische Beamte im Spiegel der Schriften des Michael Psellos* (Munich, 1973), 79–80, 91–92, 96; cf. Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 202–3, 261.

<sup>52</sup> That Leichoudes was a eunuch is clearly attested by the sources. Only one passage of Skylitzes, 446, seemed to cause some difficulty because it was understood by scholars to indicate the existence of a son named Stephanos: cf. the discussion in Weiss, *op. cit.*, 207, note 302. But if one reads carefully the text of Skylitzes one realizes

<sup>47</sup> Cf. V. Laurent, *Le Corpus des sceaux de l’empire byzantin*, V,1 (Paris, 1963), p. xxxi; numerous examples of this practice are recorded in the indices of volumes V,2 (Paris, 1965), and V,3 (Paris, 1972) of this work, *s.v.* *πρόεδρος*.

<sup>48</sup> The text restituted in brackets could also read [ο]κ(ονόμου) τοῦ].

friend of Michael Psellos, played an important political role during the reign of Constantine Monomachos. For several years he was his trusted counselor and collaborator, and assumed the important responsibilities of *mesazon* or *paradynasteuon* until, toward the end of this reign, he fell into disgrace and was replaced. We know for sure that he bore the title of *proedros*.<sup>53</sup> We can also assume that he held an office in the central administration (as did all *mesazontes*),<sup>54</sup> but we do not know what this office was. In other words, although no source attests that he was ever a *mystikos*, there is no information excluding this possibility.<sup>55</sup> On the contrary, this office which designated the Emperor's confidential counselor who also had important judicial responsibilities would fit very well what we know of Leichoudes' activities under Constantine Monomachos.<sup>56</sup>

We also know for sure that Leichoudes was closely associated with St. George of Mangana from the reign of Constantine IX until the day when he became patriarch in 1059. Our information comes from a much discussed text of the Continuator of Skylitzes, repeated with some

variants by Zonaras.<sup>57</sup> We are told that Constantine Monomachos has given to Leichoudes the care (*πρόνοια*) of Mangana and entrusted him with its titles of property (*δικαιώματα*)—titles which, according to Zonaras, guaranteed the independence of the institution (*ἐλευθερίας . . . ἔγγραφα*). This donation was obviously made for life, for when Isaac I Comnenos wanted to regain control of Mangana in 1059, he was obliged to threaten Leichoudes with a judicial inquiry about his alleged wrongdoings and thus forced him to repudiate any claims to the *sekreton* and return to the Emperor the documents that he had in his possession.

It is now established that the term *πρόνοια*, used by the Continuator of Skylitzes, did not have in this context the technical meaning which it acquired later. And, in my opinion, Monomachos' donation can hardly be considered a *charistike*, since it concerned a financial and administrative complex far larger than the monastery of St. George. It concerned, in fact, the whole *sekreton* of the *oikos* of the Tropaiophoros at the head of which, as we have seen, one should expect to find a *megas oikonomos*, undoubtedly entrusted with keeping the *dikaionmata* of the institution.

What I am suggesting is that Constantine Leichoudes was in fact appointed *megas oikonomos* of the Tropaiophoros for life. There is no doubt that this arrangement went well beyond a simple administrative appointment since Leichoudes was entitled to keep for himself the surplus of his *sekreton*'s revenues (very much like Maria Skleraina before him) and could not be legally removed from this position even by an imperial order.<sup>58</sup>

If the *proedros* Constantine Leichoudes, who was entrusted with the care of Mangana, could

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that what it says is that Stephanos was the son of a (lady) *Λειχουδία* (probably the sister of Constantine), and as such was related to and protected by the *paradynasteuon* (*δ τοῦ*).

<sup>53</sup> Skylitzes, 496; Zonaras, III, 661 (in 1057).

<sup>54</sup> It may be recalled here that the prerogatives of a *mesazon* or *paradynasteuon* were not clearly defined; that their extent depended upon the emperor's will; and that the name *mesazon* or *paradynasteuon* never became a real title in the court hierarchy. See H.-G. Beck, "Der byzantinische Ministerpräsident," *BZ*, 48 (1955), 309–38; and Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 260–63.

<sup>55</sup> No other *mystikos* is attested during Constantine Monomachos' reign: cf. the prosopographical list in R. Guiland, "Le mystique, *δ μυστικός*," *REB*, 26 (1968), 279–96. On the other hand we know that Leichoudes held the office of *protovestiaris* before becoming patriarch of Constantinople in 1059 (cf. R. Guiland, "Le *protovestiaire*," *EtByz*, 2 [1944], 209–10); but it seems certain that his appointment to this office came after the period of disgrace (last years of Constantine Monomachos) and was probably made by Isaac I Comnenos (1057–59), who later elevated him to the patriarchal throne.

<sup>56</sup> On the attributions of the *mystikoi*, see Oikonomides, *Les listes* (*supra*, note 15), 324. On the administrative and judicial activities of Leichoudes, see the publications quoted in note 51 *supra*.

<sup>57</sup> Tsolakes, "Ἡ συνέχεια" (*supra*, note 10), 106; Zonaras, III, 670–71. Detailed discussion of these texts and bibliographical indications in Lemerle, *Cinq études*, 280–82. Cf. also A. P. Každan, *Agrarnye otnošenija v Vizantii v XIII–XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1952), 212–13.

<sup>58</sup> In that particular kind of concession, special administrative arrangements were inevitable. For example, Alexios I's mother, Anna Dalassena, who had received Myrelaion under similar conditions, did not appoint an *oikonomos* at the head of her *sekreton*: its administration was in the hands of a person called "her representative" (*δ εκπροσωπῶν*), obviously because she kept for herself the prerogatives of the *oikonomos*. See Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et diplomata* (*supra*, note 49), VI, 27, 28, 33.

be the megas oikonomos of the Tropaiophoros,<sup>59</sup> he could also be the Constantine of the "Malyj Sion" inscription.

b. *The historical context.* At the time when Leichoudes was Constantine IX's parady-nasteuon, relations between Russia and Byzantium went through a series of delicate moments. In 1043 the Russian fleet attacked Constantinople, without success. In 1046 a peace treaty was signed between the two powers and, most probably in 1047, a Russian contingent was dispatched to Constantinople to help Constantine Monomachos put down the revolt of Leo Tornikes.<sup>60</sup> New problems arose in 1050/51: Prince Vladimir, in an effort to assert the independence of the Kievan Church from the patriarchate, had a new metropolitan of his capital, Hilarion, himself a Russian, elected and consecrated by a synod which convened in Kiev. This event, however, coincided approximately with the marriage of Prince Vsevolod to a Byzantine princess; and the government of Constantinople finally engineered Hilarion's deposition and his replacement with a Greek metropolitan, Ephraim (1052). It will be well to recall that it was while these events took place that the new cathedral of St. Sophia was being built in Novgorod, entirely of stone (1045–50).<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note that in our case the word πρόνοια seems to have been used in connection with an οἰκονόμος and that later the crystallized institution of πρόνοια also will be called οἰκονομία. This may be characteristic of a parallel semantic evolution of the two words, and of the concepts lying behind them.

<sup>60</sup> A. P. Každan, "Once More About the 'Alleged' Russo-Byzantine Treaty (ca. 1047) and the Pecheneg Crossing of the Danube," *JÖB*, 26 (1977), 70.

<sup>61</sup> The bibliography on Russo-Byzantine relations in the forties and fifties of the eleventh century is vast. Among the relatively recent publications the following should be mentioned: M. V. Levčenko, *Očerki po istorii Russko-Vizantijskikh otnošenij* (Moscow, 1956), 386ff.; A. Poppe, "Russkie

It is natural to suppose that, in the course of these activities, gifts were sent from Byzantium to Russia. It is natural, too, that the Byzantine parady-nasteuon, in order to emphasize one of those important events—the peace of 1046; the royal marriage of ca. 1051/52; or the reinstatement of a Greek metropolitan to the throne of Kiev in 1052—should have sent a precious paten with his own monogram as a present for the cathedral of Novgorod which was then being completed. I think that such must have been the story of the "Malyj Sion" which has been preserved in the treasury of this same cathedral.

The identification of the official who commissioned the paten with Constantine Leichoudes remains, of course, hypothetical; but it is a tempting hypothesis. What we may now consider certain is that the "Malyj Sion"—or at least its upper part—is a Byzantine work of the eleventh century, made at the expense of the *oikos* of the Tropaiophoros which had been created by Constantine IX Monomachos in order to finance the needs of his mistress. It may indeed have been intended as a representation of one of the Mangana buildings.

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mitropolii Konstantinopol'skoj patriarhii v XI stoletii," *VizVrem*, 28 (1968), 85–108, and 29 (1969), 95–104; G. G. Litavrin, "Psell o pričinah poslednego pohoda russkikh na Konstantinopol' v 1043 g.," *VizVrem*, 27 (1967), 71–86; *idem*, "Ešče raz o pohode Russkikh na Vizantiju v Ijule 1043 g.," *VizVrem*, 29 (1969), 105–7; A. Poppe, "La dernière expédition russe contre Constantinople," *Byzantinoslavica*, 32 (1971), 1–29 and 233–68; M. Saljamon, "K voprosu o date glavnogo sraženiia Russkikh s Grekami v Ijule 1043 g.," *VizVrem*, 33 (1972), 88–91. I have not read the articles of Je. A. Mel'nikova, "Ekspedicia Ingvara Putešestvennika na vostok i pohod russkikh na Vizantiju v 1043 g.," *Skandinav. Sborn.*, 21 (1976), 74–88 (cf. *Byzantinoslavica*, 39 [1978], 295), and G. G. Litavrin, "Vojna Rusi protiv Vizantii v 1043 g.," *Issledovanija po istorii slavjanskikh i balkanskikh narodov. Epoha srednevekov'ja. Kievskaja Rus' i ee slavjanskije sosedi* (Moscow, 1972), 178–222 (cf. *BZ*, 69 [1976], 530).



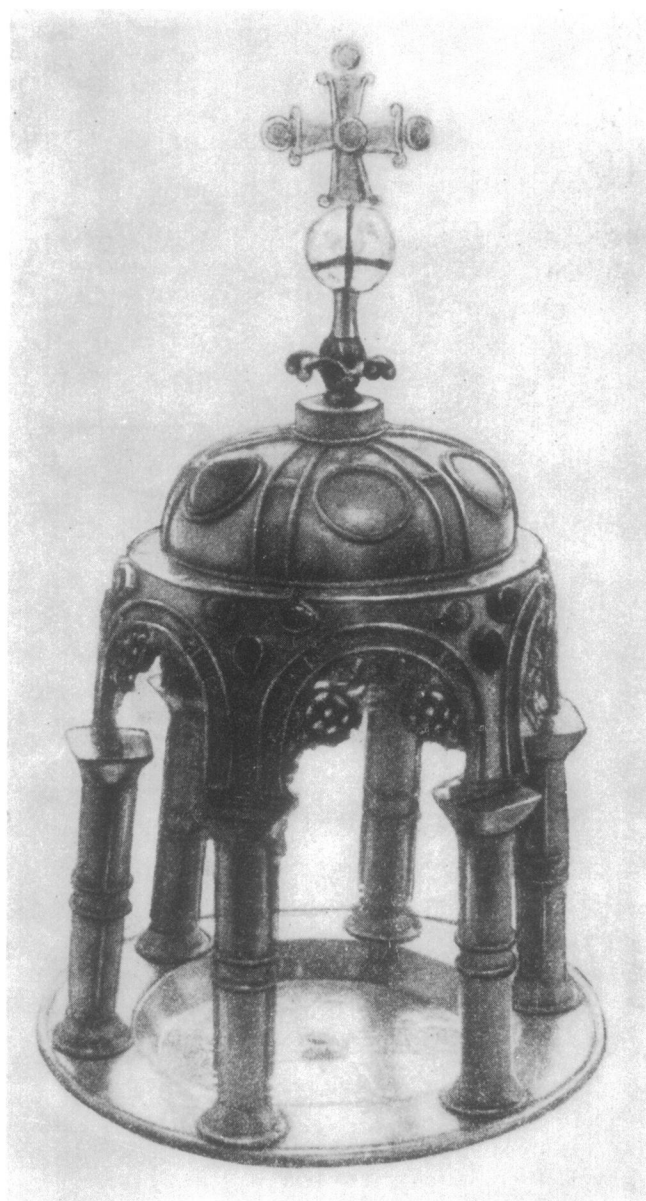


a. Obverse



b. Reverse

1. Dumbarton Oaks, Seal, D.O. 58.106.39



2.

Novgorod, Governmental Museum. The "Malyj Sion"



3. The Inscribed Disc